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WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA
SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

SHREVEPORT DIVISION

TERRY L. SANDERS

CIVIL ACTION NO. 06-76-P

VERSUS

JUDGE HICKS

ANGELA WALTMAN, ET AL.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE HORNSBY

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with the standing order of this Court, this matter was referred to the undersigned Magistrate Judge for review, report and recommendation.

STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Before the Court is a civil rights complaint filed in forma pauperis by pro se plaintiff Terry L. Sanders ("Plaintiff"), pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. This complaint was received and filed in this Court on January 10, 2006. Plaintiff alleges his civil rights were violated by his court appointed attorney and her supervisor. He names Angela Waltman and James R. Phillips as defendants.

Plaintiff claims that on February 17, 2005, Angel Waltman was appointed to represent him in a criminal matter in the Louisiana Twenty-Sixth Judicial District Court. He claims James R. Phillips is Waltman's supervisor at the Indigent Defender Board. He claims that as a result of Defendants' actions and violations, he was falsely imprisoned. He claims Waltman advised him to plead guilty.

As relief, Plaintiff seeks monetary compensation.

For the following reasons, Plaintiff's complaint should be dismissed as frivolous.

LAW AND ANALYSIS

Plaintiff claims his defense attorney Angela Waltman and her supervisor James R. Phillips provided ineffective assistance of counsel. However, Plaintiff does not specifically allege Angela Waltman and James R. Phillips acted under color of state law.

Section 1983 prescribes redress for conduct by any person who, under color of state law, acts to deprive another person of any right, privilege, or immunity secured by the Constitution and laws of the United States. 42 U.S.C. § 1983. A plaintiff in a civil rights suit must show that the conduct complained of was committed by a person acting under color of state law. Neither privately obtained nor court appointed defense attorneys act under color of state law for purposes of Section 1983.

Both a retained and a court appointed attorney serve their client, the accused; they do not serve the state. They serve a private function for their client that follows from the very nature of the attorney-client relationship and for which no state office or authority are needed. Hence, neither a retained nor a court appointed attorney acts under color of state law and cannot be held liable under Section 1983. See Polk County v. Dodson, 454 U.S. 312 (1981); Ellison v. DeLa Rosa, 685 F.2d 959, 960 (5th Cir. 1982) (citing Polk County, *supra*); United States ex rel. Simmons v. Zibilich, 542 F.2d 259, 261 (5th Cir. 1976); Nelson v. Stratton, 469 F.2d 1155 (5th Cir. 1972); Richardson v. Fleming, 651 F.2d 366 (5th Cir. 1981); Mills v. Criminal District Court #3, 837 F.2d 677 (5th Cir. 1988)(citing Nelson,

supra).

As such, Plaintiff's civil rights complaint should be dismissed as frivolous.

CONCLUSION

Because Plaintiff filed this proceeding in forma pauperis, if this Court finds Plaintiff's complaint to be frivolous, it may dismiss the complaint as such at any time, before or after service of process, and before or after answers have been filed. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e); Green v. McKaskle, 788 F.2d 1116, 1119 (5th Cir. 1986); Spears v. McCotter, 766 F.2d 179 (5th Cir. 1985). District courts are vested with extremely broad discretion in making a determination of whether an in forma pauperis (IFP) proceeding is frivolous and may dismiss a claim as frivolous if the IFP complaint lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact. Hicks v. Garner, 69 F.3d 22 (5th Cir. 1995); Booker v. Koonce, 2 F.3d 114 (5th Cir. 1993); Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 109 S.Ct. 1827, 104 L.Ed.2d 338 (1989).

For the reasons stated above, the Court finds that the IFP complaint based upon a violation of Plaintiff's civil rights lacks an arguable basis in law.

Accordingly;

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Plaintiff's civil rights complaint be **DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE** as frivolous under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e).

OBJECTIONS

Under the provisions of 28 U.S.C. 636(b)(1)(C) and Fed. R. Civ. Proc. 72(b), parties aggrieved by this recommendation have ten (10) business days from service of this report

and recommendation to file specific, written objections with the Clerk of Court, unless an extension of time is granted under Fed. R. Civ. Proc. 6(b). A party may respond to another party's objections within ten (10) days after being served with a copy thereof. Counsel are directed to furnish a courtesy copy of any objections or responses to the District Judge at the time of filing.

A party's failure to file written objections to the proposed findings, conclusions and recommendation set forth above, within 10 days after being served with a copy shall bar that party, except upon grounds of plain error, from attacking on appeal the unobjected-to proposed factual findings and legal conclusions accepted by the District Court. See Douglas v. U.S.A.A., 79 F.3d 1415 (5th Cir. 1996) (en banc).

THUS DONE AND SIGNED, in chambers, at Shreveport, Louisiana, on this the 3rd day of March 2006.



MARK L. HORNSBY
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

CC:SMH